

REMARKS

The Amendment is filed concurrently with a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) of the above referenced application.

Claims 1-19 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-19 are amend herein.

Claims 1, 4, 9, and 16 are the independent.

Claim 12 is objected to on informality grounds. Claim 12 is amended, as suggested by the Examiner, to address the noted concern.

Claims 1-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Nishizaki et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,616,535) in view of Stamper (GB 2,334,456).

The rejection is respectfully traversed. As described, an express objective of Nishizaki is to provide an IC card system (see, for example, column 1, lines 26-29). Furthermore, as described with, for example, reference to Figure 1, the use of an IC card in lieu of tokens appears to be a principle of Nishizaki's operation. Indeed, as described, Nishizaki's IC card is specifically described to store electronic (i.e. virtual) game tokens. Thus, it appears that the proposed replacement of Nishizaki's IC card reader with Stamper's IC token reader would make Nishizaki incapable of meeting its stated objective or of complying with a principle of its operation, and accordingly would be inconsistent with Nishizaki's own teachings.

However, to expedite allowance of this application, independent claims 1, 4, 9, and 16 are amended to require that an action figure be attached to the token with built-in IC chip in a detachable manner, such that the attached action figure may be removed from the token with built-in IC chip. This feature is disclosed, for example, on page 18, lines 13-14, of the present specification.

It is respectfully submitted that neither Nishizaki nor Stamper disclose such features, and thus that the applied combination of Nishizaki and Stamper lacks any suggestion of the features now recited in each of independent claims 1, 4, 9, and 16.

More particularly, Nishizaki's teachings are directed solely to the use of IC cards and hence Nishizaki lacks any teaching or suggestion relating to a token with built-in IC chip. Therefore, Nishizaki necessarily lacks any disclosure of an action figure that is attachable to such a token in a detachable manner so that the attached action figure may be removed from the token.

On the other hand, even if Stamper's "base" 14 of Figure 1 can be properly considered to correspond to a token (which is not admitted), Stamper, fails to make any suggestion that the "base" 14 and "figure" 12 form other than a unitary structural element. That is, nothing in Stamper suggests that the "figure" 12 is or could be removably attached to the "base" 14. Rather, it is respectfully submitted that what is suggested by Stamper is that "figure" 12 is permanently attached to the "base" 14. (See, for example Stamper's description of Figure 1 on page 5, line 21, through page 6, line 2, and of Figures 6A-6C on page 7, lines 15-21)

Independent claims 1, 4, 9, and 16 are also amended to require that the upward-facing recess is provided on a support disposed next to a display device which shows progress of a game. This feature is disclosed, for example, on page 28, lines 18-22, and page 31, lines 21-27, of the present specification, and advantageously facilitates the player developing a special feeling toward the token as the game proceeds.

As discussed above, Nishizaki's teachings are directed solely to the use of IC cards and hence Nishizaki lacks any teaching or suggestion relating to a location of a token reader. More generally, as understood Nishizaki also lacks any teaching or

suggestion relating to the location of the disclosed IC card reader with respect to a display device which shows progress of a game.

Stamper, on the other hand, as for example shown in Figures 2-5, explicitly discloses that the memory pack “nest” (20, 30 and 40) is either attached by cable to the controller or located next to controller. Stamper lacks any disclosure suggesting that the “nest” could or should be located next to a display device which shows progress of a game.

Thus, it is also respectfully submitted that neither Nishizaki nor Stamper disclose such features, and that the applied combination of Nishizaki and Stamper lacks any suggestion of the features now recited in each of independent claims 1, 4, 9, and 16.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of independent claims 1, 4, 9, and 16 (and their respective dependencies) be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Other features recited in the dependent claims further distinguish over the applied prior art.

For example, claims 7, 8, 14 and 18, as amended, require that the peripheral rim of the recess has a projecting portion, which may engage with a notch provided in the token with built-in IC chip. This feature is disclosed, for example, on page 30, lines 19-25, of the present specification and, for example, ensures that the connector 19a is connected to the information reading/writing device 112 at the right position.

As discussed above, Nishizaki's teachings are directed solely to the use of IC cards and hence Nishizaki lacks any need for a peripheral rim of a recess that has a projecting portion.

Stamper, on the other hand, as for example shown in Figures 2-5, lacks any teaching or suggestion of a peripheral rim of a recess that has an inwardly projecting

portion. Since Stamper uses infrared signals, it lacks any need to ensure that a connector is connected to the nest at the right position.

Claim 19, as amended, requires that both tokens with a built-in IC chip and ordinary tokens (i.e., without an IC chip) may be paid out from respective openings. This feature is disclosed, for example, on page 29, lines 16-18 and page 30, lines 1-12, of the present specification.

Neither Nishizaki nor Stamper disclose payouts of tokens with a built-in IC chip as well as ordinary tokens.

Claims 2, 5, 10, 11, 13 and 17 are amended to correct obvious editorial errors and claim 15 is amended solely for clarification.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and an early indication of the same is courteously solicited. The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone at the below listed local telephone number, in order to expedite resolution of any remaining issues and further to expedite passage of the application to issue, if any further comments, questions or suggestions arise in connection with the application.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of

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this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit Account No. 01-2135
(Case No. 1227.43061X00) and please credit any excess fees to such Deposit
Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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